

By Representatives Frankel, Murman, Dennis and Ritchie

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child care; providing
3 legislative intent; authorizing the
4 establishment of Institutes of Excellence in
5 Infant and Toddler Development; specifying
6 functions of Institutes of Excellence;
7 providing for funding; requiring the submission
8 of annual evaluations; requires the
9 Articulation Coordinating Committee to conduct
10 an assessment; requires the adoption of rules;
11 providing an effective date.

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13 WHEREAS, recent brain development research has shown
14 that the greatest window of opportunity for brain development
15 in children is during the first three years of life, and

16 WHEREAS, Florida care and educational support systems
17 do not adequately address the needs in this area, and

18 WHEREAS, over 60 percent of the mothers of children
19 under six are in the workforce, and

20 WHEREAS, the number of working mothers is expanding as
21 Florida implements WAGES initiatives, and

22 WHEREAS, over one-half of Florida's infants and
23 toddlers are cared for by family providers, with wide
24 variation in quality, and

25 WHEREAS, there is a tremendous need to educate both
26 parents and providers about the importance of these first
27 three years of life, and

28 WHEREAS, improving the quality of care and education
29 during this critical time period of the first three years of
30 life is a high priority of the Legislature, NOW, THEREFORE,
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1 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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3 Section 1. Institutes of Excellence in Infant and
4 Toddler Development.--

5 (1) The Legislature recognizes the importance of
6 preschool developmental education for children from birth to
7 kindergarten age. Therefore, the Legislature authorizes
8 community colleges and public or private colleges and
9 universities to establish Institutes of Excellence in Infant
10 and Toddler Development. Initiatives of Institutes of
11 Excellence are to be consistent with legislative initiatives
12 relating to school readiness, address specific concerns of
13 children from birth to age 3, and link directly with other
14 efforts in the community, including Head Start, Healthy Start
15 and Healthy Families, subsidized child care, and Caring for
16 Kids. Legislative funding will enable institutes to serve as
17 model demonstration and resource development programs in the
18 community for the development of professional child care
19 providers and for the enhancement of knowledge on the part of
20 providers, related professionals and parents regarding the
21 development of children from birth to age 3.

22 (2) Institutes of Excellence in Infant and Toddler
23 Development may be established by community colleges and
24 public or private colleges and universities. Initial
25 designation of community colleges and public or private
26 colleges and universities authorized to establish an Institute
27 of Excellence shall be provided by the Legislature in the
28 General Appropriations Act. During the 2000-2001 fiscal year,
29 and thereafter, community colleges and public or private
30 colleges and universities shall submit to the Secretary of
31 Health and the Commissioner of Education requests for

1 authorization to establish an Institute of Excellence in
2 Infant and Toddler Development. The Secretary of Health and
3 the Commissioner of Education shall review the requests and
4 submit those that meet guidelines established by the State
5 Board of Education and the Department of Health to the
6 Legislature for funding. Institutes of Excellence established
7 at community colleges which have established child development
8 training centers, pursuant to 240.382, should be created as
9 part of that center. Institutes of Excellence may be
10 established by community colleges or public or private
11 colleges or universities in cooperation with an institution
12 which has established a child development training center
13 according to 240.382.

14 (3) Institutes of Excellence shall perform the
15 following functions:

16 (a) Outreach efforts, including support for infant and
17 toddler specialists in the child care coordinating agencies
18 and other existing community training and technical assistance
19 programs who provide services to child care providers and
20 parents, and the development of marketing and outreach
21 materials for trainers, parents, and child care and related
22 professionals. An institute may also provide leadership
23 training in conjunction with the Caring for Kids program to
24 promote quality initiatives, such as accreditation of centers
25 and family day care homes serving children from birth to age
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27 (b) Development and implementation of observation and
28 demonstration sites at the community college or university.
29 Such sites shall be used:

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1 1. By the community, including other child care
2 providers, training providers, and parents, for observations
3 of a model quality child care environment.

4 2. By related providers to provide quality health care
5 services, including critical screening for auditory, visual,
6 and other physical impairments that can impede healthy brain
7 development.

8 3. As sites to implement efforts that identify early
9 language acquisition difficulties in infants and toddlers, and
10 that target interventions for improving early language
11 development.

12 (c) Development and support of specialized training
13 courses, systems, and programs in the area of infant and
14 toddler development from birth to age 3 which include
15 articulation mechanisms to ensure and promote career ladder
16 within the educational institution and among other
17 institutions. Such training shall:

18 1. Be provided for a wide range of existing and
19 potential child care workers, including economically
20 disadvantaged citizens.

21 2. Be established as a mechanism to increase the
22 professional stature of those working in the child care arena.

23 3. Provide leadership development for child care
24 center directors.

25 4. Include coordinated development and implementation
26 of distance learning instruction, to provide continuing
27 education for family providers and parents in their homes or
28 in centrally located sites such as public libraries or child
29 care coordinating agencies.

30 (4) Funding shall be included annually in the General
31 Appropriations Act to provide grants for those Institutes of

1 Excellence specifically authorized by the Legislature to be
2 established. Funding for Institutes of Excellence that are
3 created as part of child development training centers is not
4 to supplant funding provided according to 240.382 or to be
5 used for operational costs or facilities currently funded
6 through that section.

7 (5) Institutes of Excellence must submit to the
8 Secretary of Health and the Commissioner of Education
9 evaluations of progress made. Evaluations shall indicate the
10 number of persons receiving services, the number of community
11 training and technical assistance programs, the number of
12 children evaluated and served in model programs, the
13 effectiveness of articulation agreements, and other
14 performance measures required by the local readiness council.

15 (6) The Commissioner of Education shall assign to the
16 Articulation Coordinating Committee the responsibility for
17 conducting a statewide assessment to determine the extent and
18 nature of instruction for those who work or are training to
19 work in the fields of child care and early childhood
20 education. The Articulation Coordinating Committee shall,
21 after completing this assessment, recommend rules that will
22 provide for credit to be awarded to those who enroll in and
23 complete courses offered by both private and public providers
24 of early childhood instruction, including instruction that
25 addresses the minimum training requirements for employment in
26 the child care field and for attainment of the child
27 development associate credential, or its equivalent. Such
28 recommendations shall also provide for articulation of
29 vocational credit to college credit, and articulation of
30 credits earned in an associate in science degree program, or
31 an associate in arts specialization course to credit in a

1 baccalaureate degree program. The Commissioner of Education
2 shall implement the recommendations of the Articulation
3 Coordinating Committee through rules adopted by the State
4 Board of Education.

5 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

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10 Authorizes the establishment of Institutes of Excellence
11 in Infant and Toddler Development. Specifies functions of
12 Institutes of Excellence. Provides for funding. Requires
13 the submission of annual evaluations. Requires the
14 Articulation Coordinating Committee to conduct an
15 assessment and to recommend rules regarding the extent
16 and nature of child care training. Requires the State
17 Board of Education to adopt rules.

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